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November 19, 2020

Charles H. Peterson

Dr. Charles Peterson - a 24-yr member of the North Carolina Environmental Management Commission - passed away on October 24th.

In addition to numerous volunteer positions on State scientific panels and environmental management bodies, he chaired the EMC's Water Quality Committee from 1993 until 2013. He also chaired the Coastal Habitat Protection Plan's three-commission Steering Committee from 2000 to 2013.

Four Governors appointed Pete to the EMC across administrations of six DEQ Secretaries. His service as Water Quality Committee Chairman occurred under the EMC leadership of Dr. David Moreau and Mr. Stephen Smith.

As an educator and coastal ecology researcher at UNC's Institute for Marine Sciences, he made every Water Quality Committee and EMC meeting an educational experience for all attending while completing Committee business efficiently and effectively.

Dr. Peterson spoke eloquently about the issues, science, and management decision-making for which this body is charged.

He and EMC Chairman David Moreau arrived on the EMC at the right time, and they were a gift to our State as they shared their vision, knowledge, experience, and leadership.

Undeniably, Dr. Peterson led the Water Quality Committee during the most constructive and beneficial period of water quality policymaking in our State. This was accomplished in close collaboration with DEQ's talented and committed staff, DEQ leadership, fellow EMC members under Dr. Moreau's and Mr. Smith's leadership, engaged stakeholders, and the public. He was a respected scientific advisor to both the Executive and Legislative branches of government, not only in North Carolina but also in other states such as Alaska as its leaders responded to the Exxon Valdez oil spill and its impacts.

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Peterson Tribute

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It required three slides to list the major water quality planning and rulemaking actions accomplished by the EMC during Dr. Peterson's time as Water Quality Chairman. This includes

- the development of 62 basin-wide management plans for our 17 river basins,
- implementation of water supply watershed protection rules in each of our 100 counties
- wetlands rules
- riparian buffer rules for the Neuse, Tar-Pamlico, and Catawba Rivers
- wastewater management rules for the State's rapidly expanding animal feeding operations
- nutrient strategy rules for Jordan and Falls Lakes, and
- multiple Triennial Reviews of surface water quality standards.

Dr. Peterson understood the interconnectivity of water, air, and land and was always supportive of the Air Quality Committee's efforts during my time as its Chair. We served on the EMC together for 18 years.

Our State's waters, public health, and quality of life as it relates to recreation and aesthetics are in such a better place because of Pete.

His legacy will not only be cleaner, healthier waters in our State but also an increased public understanding that it is our responsibility to preserve, restore, and protect North Carolina's environment.

I know you join me in sending our condolences to his family, friends, and colleagues, along with our sincerest appreciation for his service to our State.



Marion Deerhake, Member
North Carolina Environmental Management Commission



Dr. A. Stanley Meiburg, Chair
North Carolina Environmental Management Commission